

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Reconsideration of this application and entry of the foregoing amendments are respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended to make reference to sequence identifiers and to include the Sequence Listing submitted herewith on separate sheets. Entry of the Sequence Listing does not raise the issue of new matter as the sequence information contained therein is presented in the application as originally filed. The computer readable copy of the Sequence Listing submitted herewith is the same as the attached paper copy of that Listing.

The claims have been revised to define the invention with additional clarity and to make reference to sequence identifiers. Claims 21 and 23 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 1 to 12 and 20 to 22 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, as allegedly being non-enabled. Withdrawal of the rejection is in order for the reasons that follow.

The Examiner acknowledges that the specification is enabling for methods of predicting whether an individual having HBV infection will respond to IFN $\alpha$ . The claims as now presented read IFN $\alpha$  rather than IFN.

Reconsideration of the rejection is requested.

Claims 1 to 22 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Withdrawal of the rejection is in order for the reasons that follow.

The term 'preS1 (94-117) peptide' has been replaced by the term 'preS1 peptide consisting of the sequence of residues 94-117 (SEQ ID NO: 1)' in claims 1 to 20 and 22. Claim 21 has been cancelled.

Reconsideration is requested.

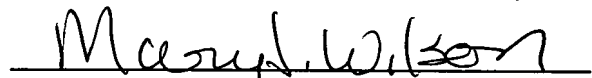
Claim 23 stands rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Cancellation of the claim renders the rejection moot.

This application is submitted to be in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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